

March 4, 2025

Dear Delegate Pena-Melnyk,

We are writing in regards to SB 1027 which is assigned to be read before the Rules Committee. This bill is to establish a Waiver Advisory Council for the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). As stakeholders for our oldest daughter, a resident of Linthicum, we are asking for your support in favor of this bill. This advisory council is sorely needed for the following reason: The Medicaid Waiver benefits thousands of developmentally disabled individuals in the state. Without it, essential services would be impossible to provide for this segment of our population. It absolutely must be protected and its use applied with each individual's personal needs at the forefront. That is its most important purpose.

Our daughter Nia is 56 years old and has been on the Medicaid Waiver since the age of 21 years. We have seen much 'changing of the guard' at DDA during these years. Not all administrators have had a full understanding of the needs of the individuals for whom they are making decisions affecting their lives nor of the waiver itself. In addition, each new gubernatorial administration presents new ideas and changes that affect the most vulnerable people and their families in the state. The flux is troublesome to say the least. There needs to be some consistency and stability built in so the waiver funds are used in a cost effective manner as well as keeping needs in mind over time. A Waiver Advisory Council which includes stakeholders in for the long haul with their adult child is vital. It would provide a meeting ground on a regular basis between a government agency and those affected by its advice and ultimate influence in decision making. It is long overdue. Please support this bill.

With much appreciation for your consideration we are,

Janet and Bill Janyska
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